

**TESTIMONY OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND  
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 200**

**An Act To Expand Turkey Hunting Opportunities For Young Hunters**

**PRESENTED BY: Representative MARKS of Pittston.**

**COSPONSORED BY: Representative CRAFTS of Lisbon  
Representative EVANGELOS of Friendship  
Representative HICKMAN of Winthrop  
Representative SHORT of Pittsfield  
Representative WOOD of Sabattus  
Senator BURNS of Washington**

**DATE OF HEARING: April 2, 2013**

Good afternoon Senator Dutremble, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Jim Connolly, Wildlife Division Director at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking in opposition to **L.D. 200**.

L.D. 200 directs the department to establish a 6 day spring youth hunting season for hunting wild turkeys in April when school is not in session.

The department is opposed to this bill because it requires that the season occur in April, prior to the start of the regular turkey hunting season. The department feels the expanded opportunities proposed by the Turkey Working Group when implemented by the department will meet the bill's intent. The current season is timed to allow the majority of the female turkeys to be bred and incubate eggs at the onset of the season. Having hunters pursuing turkeys in the middle of the breeding cycle has the potential to disrupt and reduce successful breeding. All New England states have a spring turkey hunting season with opening days of May 1 or the weekend proceeding May 1<sup>st</sup>. The bill as proposed would not be consistent with accepted turkey management principles. Even within the current season framework the real challenge in increasing turkey hunting opportunity for young hunters is to get adults to take youths hunting. The department works to address this problem by encouraging rod and gun clubs and other organizations to offer workshops specifically designed for youths and their parents. This is to help encourage turkey hunting by youth.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.